

Fire Department

Duxbury Clipper, Thursday, March 5, 1970

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NEW AERIAL LADDER

Having heard of the 65-foot aerial ladder truck the Duxbury volunteer firemen bought from Maxdm in Hanover for \$2750, the Clipper editors took a look at it Friday afternoon.

Our suspicions were aroused, since the firemen have a sinister plan to sell the ladder truck to the Town of Duxbury for a dollar. We wanted to know whether the dollar was going in the right direction.

Ladder 3 of the Quincy Fire Department, vintage of 1947. We expected to see a creaky, superannuated slag-heap, so we walked right by the sleek shiny white ladder truck parked in the Central Fire Station. When you see this engine on your way into Town Meeting you will also be pleasantly surprised.

Deputy Fire Chief Howard Blanchard lifted the hood to exhibit the new, completely overhauled massive motor, including brand new wiring.

The glistening paint job donated by Bay Motors (courtesy of Gordon Cushing) was only part of the unfolding story. We asked about the gold-leaf lettering on the vehicle. This artistic work was done at no charge by John Fultz of Temple St., a retired sign painter.

We noticed 220 feet of brightly varnished ladders. They were scraped, sanded and varnished by the volunteer firemen under the direction of Harold Eddy, a former carpenter turned fireman. Harold does the carpentry (for free) for the Duxbury Fire Department, just as his brother Bill does the welding, Howie Blanchard the plumbing, and Chief George (Mike) Butler the repair work on the motors.

This saves the town a substantial sum a year.

There were rumblings at first when the firemen acquired the engine. You know, never look a gift horse in the mouth. Buy the truck for a dollar now, then turn it in for an \$80,000 model in three or four years. Butler and Blanchard have no such thoughts. In 1967, in his capital outlay budget, Chief Butler included a \$60,000 aerial ladder truck to be purchased in 1973. That won't be necessary now. For although neither the chief nor his deputy believe in buying second-hand equipment in the interests of public safety, this is a specialized unit whose maximum use at a fire would be little more than five or ten minutes.

NEED SHOWN

The Duxbury Fire Department was busy in 1969 handling several serious fires, including the Goodrich Lumber

Co. and the Burgess Screen House. Through experience at these two fires Chief Butler and Deputy Blanchard were completely convinced that they needed a ladder truck in service in our town. Today, such a truck would cost close to \$80,000. That would be \$1.60 on the tax rate -- too much to ask from overburdened taxpayers.

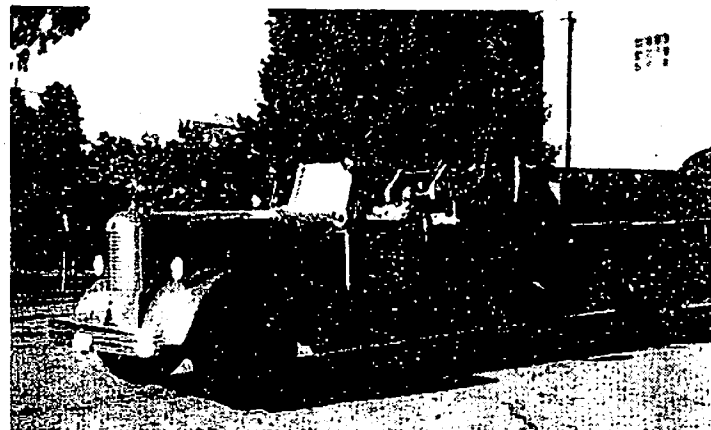
As we mentioned, a ladder truck is an exception to the rule that our Fire Department does not believe in buying used emergency equipment.

But an aerial ladder truck is not used for long and hard hours of pumping. Its use is limited according to the type of fire, and once in place, the use of its motor is no longer necessary. Fire underwriters do not base their acceptance of a "Ladder" on its age. A sound, well maintained "Ladder" is good for many years of service. Ladders have changed little in design in the past years.

ITS USE



The aerial ladder truck as it looks today.



The same truck as it looked when acquired.

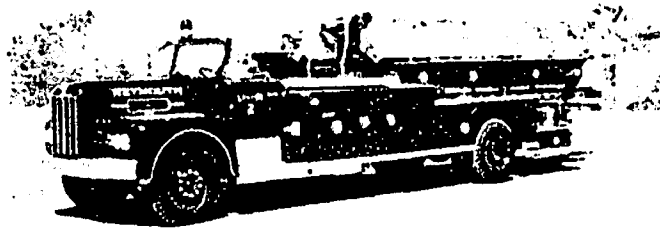
One man operating the nozzle end of a pipe projecting from the top of the ladder can pour as much water as six firemen operating handlines. In less than five minutes a fireman secured to the top of the ladder by a safety belt could remove four persons from second-story windows. Deputy Blanchard drove the truck out of the station and gave a convincing demonstration as Harold Eddy nimbly climbed the ladder, which was wheeled into four positions. Then the Clipper editors hopped in and drove with Blanchard to The First Parish Church. We accidentally tripped the siren, and among those attracted to the scene when Blanchard hoisted the ladder to the foot of the steeple, was the Rev. Richard Hasty, who could not be blamed if he thought his church was on fire.

The ladder carries surplus equipment, including fire coats, helmets, rope and lights, not to mention hand ladders that are also useful in ice rescue work.

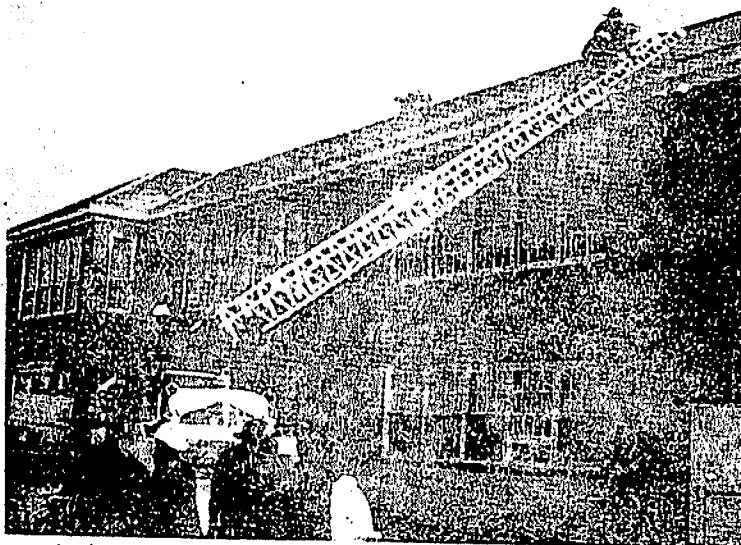
In one month, the ladder was summoned to three fires.

This is one gift horse we can look at in the mouth.

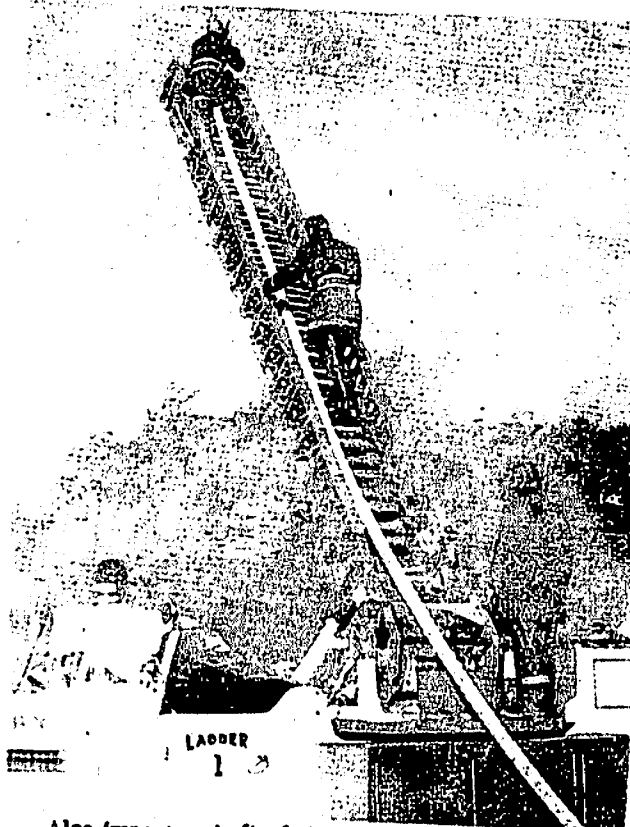
The town is indebted to the chief, deputy and to all the members of the staff -- especially the volunteer firemen.



Price tag for this new 1970 model is \$70,000!



An important feature of the aerial ladder is easy access to second story.



Also important in firefighting is being able to direct stream of water DOWN on the fire.